

**Political History Collection  
Interview H.0054.03 : Tape 3**

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**Interviewed by:** Paljor Tsarong  
**Name:** Lhamo Tsering [Tib. lha mo tshe ring]  
**Gender:** Male  
**Age:** 68  
**Date of Birth:** 1924

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## **Abstract**

Lhamo Tsering was the secretary-aide of Gyalo Thondup and was part of the second group of Tibetans trained by the CIA in America in 1958-59. After returning to India, he came to manage much of the CIA's operation in Tibet for Gyalo Thondup. In this interview, he discusses Gyalo Thondup's reform plan and the response to it. He describes the involvement of the US, including the US Ambassador's and Secretary of State's letters to the Dalai Lama, and his own work with the CIA including helping Chushigandru with airdrops. He talks about Tibet's relationship with Taiwan and how they rejected help from Taiwan. He then talks about his trip to Lhasa in 1952 with Gyalo Thondup and their meetings with the Chinese leaders. Finally, he discusses his involvement in the (Tibet) Welfare Association-Dedön Tshogpa, and how Taktse Rimpoche's servants translated wireless information into Tibetan.

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## **Tape 3**

**Q:** When you went with Sawangchemmo [Gyalo Thondup] to Tibet, you said that he told them that we should start the democratic reforms before they [the Chinese] did them. Even though you were not present, he must have talked with some government officials, and so what did you hear? What did the officials say? He must have talked with the two Sitsab and the Kashag.

**A:** Yes, he did meet with a lot of them. When he went, I could not go. However, Sawangchemmo said that if we did the liberation [read: reforms] before the Chinese, it would be useful.

**Q:** What were the two Sitsab supposed to have said?

**A:** It seems that they were accepting that it was a good idea. However, it seems that nothing could have been done immediately. Anyway, he did tell them and during our stay, nothing was done. So Sawangchemmo made liberation [reforms]—what should I say—reforms on all of his estate.

**Q:** So were they saying that they were going to do the reforms?

**A:** I think they probably had plans. Only later I found out that there was a plan.

**Q:** Are you talking about the Reform Office, the Legjō [Tib. legs bcos]?

**A:** Yes, trying to make certain decisions about the taxes. Before that, it was probably not very certain and later, it was [the plans were] made. I saw it written somewhere. So it seems they had this plan even then. I think this was in the Dalai Lama's biography or somewhere. Have a look.

**Q:** Did he talk with anyone else, like the monasteries?

**A:** Sawangchemmo [talked] with the monasteries, and the various aristocratic households [Tib. gzim shag]. For example, the aristocratic households, if one got rid of [the estate] that one needed, then that wouldn't do, right? For example, the Yabshi, they had an estate called Gyatso. . He said that he was going to keep that. Now, you know the Jangsebshar house, I wonder if you have been there or not. But this house is huge and he wanted to hand it over to the government to establish a school. After he said that, and I don't know who said it, but it was said that if he gave that up, then there were over 300 other [aristocratic] households. So what was he going to do about that? Wasn't that going to be difficult?

**Q:** What do you mean?

**A:** Now, the income of the households all came from the estates, right? If all of that was given [away], then are they not going to have difficulties living? That was what he was saying most probably.

**Q:** Yes, there were kudrak who had a lot of estates, right? One was their own for serving the government, called "Shabden Phashi [Tib. zhabs brtan pha gzhis]," and there were other estates. So was he saying that the Shabden Phashi should be handed in or something else.

**A:** At that time, I did not know how the various aristocratic households functioned. But, what I heard was that one should keep the estate that one needed, which is needed for living, right? The rest, give them to the government, and the government should provide a salary like the foreign system. So at the time, I did not know how things were instituted. Whether they were private or not. I doubt there was anything private. All were given by the government most probably. Anyway, that's what Seykusho [Gyalo] said at that time. That one should keep the estate that one needed, and the rest should be given to the government.

**Q:** Anyway, what was the main reason why he was saying that the reforms should be instituted?

**A:** It was for better conditions. The estates should be given to the government and the ula (corvée taxes) should be eliminated, and that wages should be given for the labor. This is, I think, what reform means.

**Q:** Now, last time you said that he knew that once the Chinese came, reforms had to begin.

**A:** This was the custom itself.

**Q:** So because of that, [he said] that it was better if we did them?

**A:** That it was better and if we did them, then we could win over the misers. Anyway, no matter what, they were going to liberate [read: make reforms], [and] by then it would be too late.

**Q:** When I was looking at some of the US documents, it said that one of the US ambassadors said it would be good if the Dalai Lama left Tibet.

**A:** From Yadong, right?

**Q:** Probably from there.

**A:** I think it was Yadong.

**Q:** That they would help 200 or 300 other people, along with the Dalai Lama, settle either in Sri Lanka or some other place. This letter was given to Yuthok Sawangchemmo, and then it said that it was given to someone at Yabshi House and then taken to Lhasa.

**A:** I did not hear about this at all. At that time, when the Dalai Lama was at Yadong, Sawangchemmo was not there. He was in Taiwan and the States. Gyayumchemmo was there. Otherwise, no one was there. Kungö Depön was also not there. What I told you last time, that the Chairman of the Chinese Democratic Party, they [US] may have spoken to him—he told us some things like this. I told you last time. He may have been a teacher or a principal at Kalimpong Homes, he was the Chairman of Chinese Democratic Party. He had been invited by Delhi University to give a lecture. He came to Kalimpong and was staying at Homes. I went to see him and he told me something like that.

**Q:** Yes, that's right. What was his name? Zhao Junmei or something?

**A:** Zhao Junmei, yes. He was a professor.

**Q:** Was he doing the work for Taiwan?

**A:** No. I think the US did not have somebody who knew the language, so they need an interpreter. Maybe they had relations through him. His English was very good.

**Q:** Who was he working for?

**A:** He was the chairman of a party. Not the governmental or official one like in India. There were many parties. But there was the Guomindang and many parties. He was the Chairman of the Democratic Party.

**Q:** Was he working for the Guomindang.

**A:** No, he was [part of] the Democratic Party, the opposition to the Guomindang.

**Q:** I see, the opposition.

**A:** His own party was to challenge the Guomindang.

**Q:** Then why was he around Kalimpong?

**A:** He had been invited by Indian University to give a lecture. He was a famous professor.

**Q:** Now, as I mentioned, about the American letter?

**A:** Now, there was some talk about that. Through whom the letter was sent, I don't know. Zhao Junmei, himself, told me something like that. That the US seemed to be inviting him [the Dalai Lama].

**Q:** Anyway, there was a letter. What I am interested in is who took the letter and then what the response was. I see that as something very important.

**A:** Yes, this is very important and I don't know. But I don't think the letter was given through Yabshi because, at that time, no one was at the house [Yabshi House, Darjeeling] except for the Dalai Lama's mother. [See File US- Tibet '51-59, for details. It also says either a letter or message was given to the Dalai Lama's mother]. At that time, Shakabpa was there. Yuthok Sawangchemmo and Surkhang Sawangchemmo were also there.

**Q:** Somehow, the letter had to get there, right?

**A:** Yes. I, however, don't know anything about this at all. Zhao Junmei told me the gist, that the Dalai Lama was being "invited". He knew that.

**Q:** So if he knew about it, then he must have had some relations with the US?

**A:** Yes, he could have. Party relations since it was a democratic party. Secondly, I think he may have been a graduate of a US school.

**Q:** This was probably around the time the Dalai Lama was in Yadong.

**A:** It was during the time the Dalai Lama was in Yadong. So, if you have to ask, Surkhang Sawangchemmo is not alive, nor is Yuthok Sawangchemmo.

**Q:** At this time, it could not have been Yabshi Sawangchemmo, [right]?

**A:** No.

**Q:** In '52-53?

**A:** At this time, Lhaseykusho [Tib. lha sras sku zhabs] [Gyalo] was not there.

**Q:** So if the letter was given around 1951 or '52, '53, who do you think could have taken it?

**A:** Kungö Shakabpa did go [to Yadong]. Yuthok Sawangchemmo, I'm not quite sure where he was. But Shakabpa did go, that I know very well. I think I also remember that the late Kungö Khenjung, who was the Trade Agent, also did go. So at that time, Surkhang Sawangchemmo, Yuthok Sawangchemmo, Shakabpa, and the ex-Tibetan Trade Agent were there. So they were there, and I don't think the US would have just contacted anybody except the important people.

**Q:** What about Phünkang?

**A:** Phünkang Seykusho was there and Phünkang Lhajam was there. I don't know whether he went to Yadong or not. At that time, I never took notice or interest.

**Q:** I think this, perhaps, was at Yadong, or just after Yadong.

**A:** It was Yadong itself because they were saying don't go to Tibet from Yadong and come abroad. Once [the Dalai Lama] had returned to Lhasa, then it would have been very difficult. This US matter was definitely in Yadong.

**Q:** I don't quite remember, but I also have the thinking that the US was still trying even after [the Dalai Lama] returned.

**A:** Regarding that—however—I do have a bit about this written in my book. If I look at the correspondences of Sawangchemmo, the US was still helping. He went to [Tibet] in 1952 and most probably, they must have told him that it was good to bring [the Dalai Lama] out. You know the American, what do you call it, the foreign secretary?

**Q:** Foreign? The State Department. The Secretary of State.

**A:** Yes, the Secretary of State. He wrote a letter to Sawangchemmo. I wrote it down in Chinese and I had written it in my diary. When I look at that, they had hope that the Dalai Lama would come out. However, I don't know through whom the first letter was sent. The second, he [Gyalo] had come from the States and gone to Lhasa. So he must have [been] informed. That was sort of the second one.

**Q:** Maybe this was the one.

**A:** Well, it could have been. If it was, then they definitely told him [Gyalo].

**Q:** This letter, I think, was given in Calcutta.

**A:** If they did, then the Consulate was there. After Sawangchemmo arrived from the States, he immediately went to Lhasa. He stayed there a few days and then left immediately.

**Q:** Now, you were working with US intelligence, the CIA? During this time, what were your thoughts? Did you really feel that the US was going to help?

**A:** The person who made the relations was Sawangchemmo. However, we were working under him and were actually doing the work. So because of this, we really had a little bit of faith in them. The reason being that we had to constantly be in touch, while Sawangchemmo had other things to do. The reason I had faith was that—it was not the same as today. The idea of stopping and eliminating communism was their policy line. So because of this, they helped us. They wanted us to hassle the Chinese so that communism could not settle [Tib. chags] in Tibet. Secondly, they were helping a lot of people in the world of minority nationalities [Tib. grangs nyung mi rigs] gain independence. Thirdly, they were going to get the information, right? However, at that time, the reason we believed them because we had the goal. We both were against communism. Secondly, like I said, they were supporting us.

**Q:** Is it self-determination that you are talking about when you say that they were helping people in parts of the world?

**A:** No, it was the minority nationalities. They were really supporting minorities to gain independence. So they were helping Tibet gain independence. That was the second reason. The third was that they were getting information and things like that. Even now, when I look back, their goal for helping was very good. So it's very different today where they are not thinking about ideology, but each government thinks about their own interests. Today there are relations, whether the country is communist or not. When we contacted the Chinese, [they] were saying that the US was the world's greatest enemy and [that they were] capitalists [Ch. zi ben zhu yi].

**Q:** How do they say it in Chinese?

**A:** The Chinese say [Ch. zi ben zhu yi], or capitalist system [Tib. ma rtsa ring lugs]. Then there's another one, colonialism [Ch. zhi min zhu yi; Tib. mi ser spel ba'i ring lugs].

**Q:** Imperialist.

**A:** They called the US capitalist. So capitalism and communism [Ch. gong chan zhu yi] are totally different, right? They cannot exist on the same piece of ground.

**Q:** Right.

**A:** So they are worst enemies. Today, since 1979 or something, they have become friendly. So today nobody worries about ideology, whether one is communist or not. Only self-interest. At that time, they really considered it and they helped us because they wanted to stop the communists so that they would not become big.

**Q:** Before that, the Americans were helping the Guomindang, and in the end, they lost, right? Did the Americans ever say that they were going to support Tibet and that they, along with Taiwan, were going to get back the mainland through getting support from Tibet?

**A:** The Americans did not. I don't know the decision at the high level, anyway, it was probably the policy of top decision makers. What they were saying was that "If you make relations with Taiwan, then it is useless to make relations with us." That "If you make relations with Taiwan, then you will become part of China and we will be breaking the law if we help you. You are hoping for independence and we are helping you in regard to independence. If we do that, then we will not be breaking the law."

**Q:** Oh, so they were not allowing you to have relations with Taiwan?

**A:** No, they were not allowing [us to have relations with them]. That if they allowed us to do that, then their support would be illegal. Because if we did that, then we would be considered a part of China.

**Q:** Was the US saying that clearly?

**A:** They were saying that we should not have relations with Taiwan.

**Q:** During this period, did Taiwan try and have relations with us?

**A:** Yes, but we did not.

**Q:** Were they [question not finished]

**A:** They tried hard to make connections.

**Q:** Did other Tibetans contact them?

**A:** Other Tibetans? Yes. They said that they were going to help our Mustang force in Nepal. At that time, Amdo Tsepa Dorji [Tib. tshe dpag rdo rje] told me, "We said we do not need help. They were very demanding, saying that if they helped, then they would want to bring their own people and would set up their telegraph communication [Hind. tar Tib. 'phrin]. We said, 'We don't need you to send people, we will do it ourselves.'"

**Q:** What were they saying in '51, '52, '53, '54, '55?

**A:** At that time, Sawangchemmo had contacts. There was the Taiwan representative to the UN.

**Q:** What place is this?

**A:** The UNO. The Communists did not have a representative. It was Taiwan. Sawangchemmo told the representative, he said, "Now, you are in the UN and you must support us in the UN." That "Tibet is independent. You have the power and it will be very

beneficial. Tibet has already been occupied by the Communists." They said that they would not recognize [our] independence. Then we said that "If you do not recognize [Tibet's] independence, then we will not seek your assistance." No connection was made by the public [Tib. spyi pa] on the Tibetan principle, but individual persons made connections.

**Q:** The relations with America were established sometime in 1956. After that, [in] '57-59, was that hope still there, that the Americans were really going to help?

**A:** How?

**Q:** That the Americans were going to help.

**A:** In 1958, they did not do that much. For example, they first provided help for the Chushigandru at Drigutang. They dropped arms in three places, right? At that time, they were not doing it so openly, but doing it secretly. . They were doing it secretly. Then the Dalai Lama came to India in 1959, from then on, they did it openly. They were trained in America. Prior to that, they were not taken to the US.

**Q:** So up to 1958, your hopes remained as before?

**A:** Yes, they did. More than just hope, by then, wireless people were already sent to Tibet.

**Q:** When you had contacts with them, did they ever say that our government should throw aside the 17-Point Agreement?

**A:** They never talked about that at all. Now, I don't know if at higher levels Sawangchemmo did something or not, but at my level, there were none [no talks]. From my side, all that was said was regarding resistance force and guerrilla warfare. They were not talking about the base of fighting [Tib. 'dzing yag gi gzhi] over the politics [Tib. srid thog].

**Q:** Did they ever say anything about holding on to territory that you should not lose ground [on].

**A:** In the end, it was said that ground should not be lost.

**Q:** This was toward the end?

**A:** In 1959, it was said that "You [Chushigandru] should not come out, but should hold on to existing land, and we will help with strength." That I mentioned in my book.

**Q:** Were we saying this from our side?

**A:** No, they were telling us [this]. They were saying not to withdraw, that they would drop whatever was needed. At that time, the Chushigandru came out, but they helped the ones in Tibet with great force.

**Q:** Since the US said that [help & hold on to land], at Lhüntse [Tib. lhun rtse] Dzong, a kind of a government was established.

**A:** Yes, a temporary type of government was established.

**Q:** They did establish one, and so was there a connection with that [what the US said]?

**A:** No, there was not. None whatsoever [Tib. rtsa ba nas yod ma red].

**Q:** When Lhüntse Dzong was established?

**A:** When Lhüntse Dzong started, there was no connection with the Americans. There wasn't any. However, from the time the Dalai Lama left Lhasa until he reached the border, Sawangchemmo and the American CIA knew what was going on. The reason being that one wireless operator was with the party, and they had daily reports on where they were going and what they were doing.

**Q:** Who were the wireless operators?

**A:** Athar [Tib. a thar] and Lotse [Tib. blo tshe].

**Q:** Athar, I see. So they knew everything, right?

**A:** They knew [about things] daily. From the time the Dalai Lama arrived in Lhoka until he reached the border of Mön Tawang [Tib. mon rta dbang], they were together. I have all of this written down in my second volume.

**Q:** So this thing about holding on to a piece of territory was later?

**A:** It was later. They wired Athar and Lhotse telling them not to leave and to hold on to some territory, and that they would give wide support.

**Q:** So by that time, the Dalai Lama had arrived [traveled] quite far on [up] the road?

**A:** The Dalai Lama had already arrived at the border.

**Q:** When this message was sent?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Then they [tried] holding on to some land?

**A:** When they said that [in the message], they could not stop it [the Chinese advance]. At that time, Andru Jinda [Tib. a 'brug sbyin bdag] was in the northern area. By the time he had arrived in Lhoka, everybody had already arrived in Mön Tawang. All was lost and the [advance] could not be stopped.

**Q:** So what they [US] were saying was later?

**A:** Right, later. When Andru Jinda came to Lhoka, most had already left and were in Mön Tawang.

**Q:** Now, at Lhüntse Dzong, it is said that a new government was established. So was that all from our side?

**A:** This had no connection at all with the CIA.

**Q:** No connection?

**A:** None, whatsoever. They never said to start a government, nor did they say it was good, [there was] no connection whatsoever. At that time, a daily report was sent to them, that today, they arrived at such and such place, that such and such ceremony took place, that such and such people were there, et cetera. What they told the Chushigandru was to not lose ground and to hold on to existing ground and that they would support them. I have this written in my book.

**Q:** Then their support grew, right?

**A:** Yes, then it got stronger. They sent [people] to Jagra Pemba, Chang Nagchuka, to Markham and Chang Namtso. They dropped a lot of arms and ammunition.

**Q:** Where is this place called Nagtsang. Wasn't there a large revolt there?

**A:** It is also known as Shentsa [Tib. shan rtsa] Dzong. Yes, there was a large revolt.

**Q:** Is it Tö Chang [Tib. stod byang], in northern Tö?

**A:** It is on the west side, close to Chang Namtso. Nagtsang Phurbu [Tib. phur bu] was in Shentsa Dzong. The revolt was very big. That is why we sent the wireless teacher and medical person there. The area was very distant [far away] and when they got there, when they were dropped, it had already been five to six months since they were defeated. They were "wiped out".

**Q:** What was the name of the leader?

**A:** Nagtsang Phurbu.

**Q:** I heard that there was someone by the name of Pho Argön [Tib. ?].

**A:** I don't know. When we heard about him [Nagtsang Phurbu], we sent the third wireless team to Chang Namtso. We were to send [them] to the Namtso area, but there was a mistake and [they were dropped] at Ringtso, which is one yak-drive day away. After they were dropped, [they learned that] Nagtsang Phurbu was destroyed and nothing was there.

**Q:** Chushigandru had another name of the "Army to Defend the Religion", Tensung Tanglang Magar [Tib. bstan srung dang blangs dmag sgar], right?

**A:** I doubt Chushigandru was known as Tensung Tanglang Magar. The one in Mustang was Tensung Tanglang Magar.

**Q:** Yes, they were using it and that is why I was wondering why they changed the name.

**A:** I really didn't pay attention to that. I always used the word Chushigandru.

**Q:** Last time, you mentioned that in Lhasa, you stayed there for about six months. You just mentioned about the People's Association in the third month. When you were there in Lhasa in 1952, what was your impression and what did you see?

**A:** When the situation was becoming dangerous, that day, I went to take a look at Barkor [Tib. bar skor] Street. The Chinese were building bunkers [Tib. 'dzing ra] and making preparations everywhere. The people, though they were not doing anything militantly, I think they were shouting and distributing leaflets. I don't know what day it was on in the third month. I went to look in the street and the commotion/uprising [Tib. zing cha] was about to take place. All the doors were closed and there were not many [people] moving about. All the roofs of the Chinese shops and important buildings had sandbags and machine guns ready. But there was no shooting. The next day, I heard that some of the doors were open. That one day, all was closed and they were just ready to shoot. If there was some action from our side, they would not have hesitated to kill. They were absolutely ready to shoot.

**Q:** In such a prepared state?

**A:** Yes, I saw that. Then I said that this was the situation. That they were ready to shoot. That there was no hesitation. It was mostly on the roofs of the houses on Barkor—the Chinese shops and on the important routes [were] where sandbags were stacked.

**Q:** So for 6 months, where did you stay?

**A:** Sawangchemmo stayed at his house (Yabshi House) [Lhamo must have also]. Then in Tölung, there was Seshing Estate. So

we went there and it was as I have already related to you. All the people's loan documents and the like were accumulated, separated, and all the documents were burned. For the poor, grain was given and taxes [ula labor] were abolished. If any [labor] was required, then wages were to be paid. So Seshing was the first one. Then Ramagang. I don't know whether you remember or not, but on the other side of Nortölinga [Tib. nor stod gling ga], is the Yabshi Estate, Ramagang. Then after that, we went to Lhoka.

**Q:** So all this was within six months?

**A:** Yes, six months.

**Q:** How long did you stay in Lhasa itself?

**A:** I think about five months. So within about a month, we went everywhere.

**Q:** So did you meet people during this time and have casual conversations on the politics of what the situation was et cetera?

**A:** When Kungö spoke with the government officials, I was not there at all. He went very often, but I don't know what they spoke about. I got an audience and he [Gyalo] went to Norbulinga a few times, but I did not go. So I don't know what they spoke about. Now, when he went to see the Chinese, no matter whom he met [with], I went along. When the Panchen Lama arrived, there was a lot of talk. Regarding that, I went to see Kungö Che Jigme [Tib. ce 'jigs med].

**Q:** Which Chinese leaders did you go and see?

**A:** Zhang Jingwu. He was the political representative of Mao Zedong.

**Q:** Also known as Zhang Dai biao?

**A:** Yes. When we got there. Zhang Guohua, the Commander-in-Chief, and others, came to meet us.

**Q:** So you met [with] them and what did they say?

**A:** When we first met them, they said that it was very good that we had come. That "You are young, knowledgeable," that "You have experience in foreign politics," that "The Dalai Lama is young now," and that "You must work for the building of socialism."

**Q:** At this time, there were problems with the People's Association, and so what were they saying?

**A:** Regarding the Panchen Lama, Sawangchemmo was telling them not to do such things. What they were saying was probably that the Dalai Lama had to come greet the Panchen Lama and that they must have seats of equal height. They must have said many things like that. The government was saying that this was not possible, that from the religious side, they had set arrangements between the two lamas. There were already problems regarding this. So regarding this, Sawangchemmo was telling them not to do this, since the Tibetan people would not have been happy. That Tibet had set customs and that things must be done in accordance with these. So they talked back and forth and they did listen. Sawangchemmo spoke very strongly. He also spoke when they said that they were going to remove the two Sitsab.

**Q:** At this time, there were also the people rising, right?

**A:** Regarding this, I don't know whether Sawangchemmo spoke to them or not, but he did [speak to them] regarding the Panchen Lama and the two Sitsab. This was the reason why we met. Sawangchemmo met Zhang Jingwu and there was a big argument [Tib. rtsod pa].

**Q:** During this time, they were saying that the two Sitsab had connections with imperialism, right?

**A:** That's it, that hand in hand with the imperialists, they were openly/militantly against the Chinese government. So regarding this, Sawangchemmo said that this was all wrong. So Zhang Jingwu got angry and banged his fists on the table .

**Q:** So this was in 1952. Now, the ones who were staying outside, like Sawangchemmo, Kungö Shakabpa, Khenjung—did they have any connection with the two Sitsab or the people (Tib. mimang)?

**A:** Regarding this, I can't tell you anything that I, myself, have seen or said. At that time, I did not have anything [interest]. However, as I see it, it looks to me that there was some connection when they sent people and all of that.

**Q:** Were they sending people?

**A:** Yes, they were. Now, I don't know who was meeting whom, but, there was definitely a relation/connection.

**Q:** By that time, was Drönyerchemmo Phala's influence at work?

**A:** He was there, but I sort of do not remember him being in this organization. Mainly, I think Lukhangwa may have been the advisor. The actual workers in the Tibet Welfare Association were Shakabpa, Sawangchemmo, and Khenjung Lobsang Gyentsen. Later, three tsidrun came: Thubden Nyinje, Champa Wangdü, [and] Champa Tsündrö [Tib. byams pa brtson 'grus].

**Q:** I am talking about the first People's Association [1952]. But was the Welfare Association's work not somewhat later?

**A:** Yes, it was later. No, at first the People's Association started in 1952.

**Q:** The 1952 one, with Thamjö Sonam [Tib. dam chos bsod nams] and Tsha Trunyla [Tib. tsha ba drung yig]?

**A:** Yes. Yes, they were the ones. The Tibet Welfare Association started in Kalimpong in 1954 and ended in 1959.

**Q:** Therefore, there weren't any before that?

**A:** None, except some clubs or kyidu of Kalimpong.

**Q:** Therefore, the People's Association and the problem with the Sitsab started in 1952, right? So did Shakabpa and others have connections with the People's Association during that period?

**A:** It seems clear that there was a connection in Tibet. How I know about this is that Amdo Gyetong, who is now in Canada, was sent as a messenger to make relations with the kungös. He took a lot of letters et cetera. In 1991, I went to Canada and he had those letters. He is old, around 80 years [old]. He had this document on when they first started the organization with signatures on it. I told him that it is good to put the documents to good use. He said that he was thinking of giving them to the Dalai Lama. I told him that whatever he does, it would be good to put them to use. So he said that he was going to give them [to him]. Sawangchemmo and others had sent him.

**Q:** It's good [if he gives them to the Dalai Lama]. There's no use in just keeping them.

**A:** I told him very forcefully that "These are things that you have put much effort into, and it is good if people know about them." So, this shows that there was definitely a connection. He, himself, told me that he was sent to make the connection. That he had contact with Sawangchemmo and Kungö Shakabpa. He was a trader for Kungö Shakabpa.

**Q:** Last time, I was asking you about the Welfare Association. You said that only in 1959—when the Welfare Association ended, did you know about it?

**A:** I knew about this before that. But in 1959, regarding it being ended [answer not finished]

**Q:** You said—you mentioned something about the Kalimpong organization and—let me read it to you in English. I asked you, "So did the Kalimpong organization have connections with the one in Tibet?" You said, "At that time, yes, there were. I do not know what they did, but, what I do know is they gave messages and sent letters. So I used to help, but I was not in the group. I took part in the group in 1958."

**A:** The 1958 thing was the connection with the CIA. The Tibet Welfare Association was in 1954, they were taking me here and there. So I know about it. However, I was not involved in it.

**Q:** That's it!

**A:** In 1958, I was involved with the CIA.

**Q:** The Tibet Welfare Association was ended in 1959, right?

**A:** When the Dalai Lama arrived in India in 1959, then the organization ceased.

**Q:** So when you said, "At that time, I knew what work was previously done,"—so when they closed, did you see a lot of documents?

**A:** No, I did not see [a lot of documents]. In 1954, when it was started, I heard about it. [I] not only heard about it starting, but they had all the arrangements regarding the Gyantse Flood Relief. However, I was not working in the organization. In 1958, I started my work with the CIA.

**Q:** Around that time, you had done some work of sending messages and letters, [right]?

**A:** No, I did not. They sent people to Tibet with letters. What I did was take messages and letters between Darjeeling and Kalimpong. But [I was] not working in the organization. I was like a messenger.

**Q:** I want to ask you this. The first drops were made on the 30th of the eighth month in 1956?

**A:** My document is gone for checking.

**Q:** No, it doesn't matter. Was it 1956 or '57?

**A:** The first drop was in 1957.

**Q:** That's about all I have to ask you .

**Q:** The Indian government was not formally supporting Tibet at all. In 1954, the Sino-Indian agreement was signed in which the Indians said that Tibet was a part of China. Later, when the Dalai Lama came to India in 1954, Nehru was telling him to return. At that time, Nehru himself seemed to like socialism. So, even if the Indians were not formally assisting [Tibet], what was the Intelligence Department doing? Were they helping in the 50s?

**A:** No, they were not. What I know is that from 1952 to '54 and '55, the Indians were taking keen notice [of the situation]. We were not allowed to work, and so they were really keeping a keen watch over us. So whether it was from the government side or the intelligence side, they did not do much as I look at it now.

**Q:** Did they actually try to come and stop you?



**A:** It seems that they said that one could not do that. Nothing pertaining to me, but [that was] just what I heard. At that time, it was as you have said, that Nehru [favored] socialism. Mainly, he did not like colonialism because of the English. Foreign interference during the time of the Manchus—the Chinese people did not like that. So that was probably the reason. But at that time, the Indians [would have] had to go to war if Nehru claimed that Tibet was not a part of China. But the Indians had no power.

**Q:** We were dropping people and communicating via the wireless with the US, right? So where were the Americans picking up the message? From Guam, Okinawa or some other place?

**A:** That they will never tell you. The equipment was very new and it was not just one of those you send with your hand.

**Q:** So when they sent it, it had to be sent in Tibetan, right?

**A:** Yes, in Tibetan.

**Q:** So when they listened, was Taktse Rimpoche or Kungö Lobsang Samden [Tib. blo bzang bsam gtan] doing that?

**A:** At that time, I think it was Taktse Rimpoche and his servant Thöndrub Gyentsen [Tib. don grub rgyal mtshan], and I wonder if Lobsang Samden was there. I can't tell you clearly.

**Q:** In the old days, I briefly spoke with Lobsang Samden, and he said that he did go and had some training, but then I don't know [what he did].

**A:** Then there was the Mongolian, he's dead now. Geshe Wangye [Tib. dbang rgyal], or was it Geshe Wangdü?

**Q:** The one with the monastery in New Jersey?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** It's Geshe Wangyela.

**A:** It's Geshe Wangye and them. . They would not have been where it was actually sent. The machine sent it in a few seconds, and then the message was picked up and slowly played back.

**Q:** Now, supposing Atharla and others sent a message from Samye or Drigutang, they had to send it in Tibetan, right?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** So they needed somebody who knew Tibetan, right?

**A:** Yes. You needed someone who knew Tibetan to translate them because all the news came in English.

**Q:** So was Taktse Rimpoche and others doing that?

**A:** I think their people must have been there. Some Mongolians and others who knew Tibetan. I, myself, know of Geshe Wangye since I met him. We were the ones who first went for training, myself and Thöndrub. Later, many were sent from India who knew English. Prior to that, there were very few who knew English.

**Q:** So, I am waiting for your book. Please hurry up .

**A:** The first one will definitely come out soon.

**Q:** Were there other wireless sets sent to Tibet by the CIA?

**A:** They were all sent by us.

**Q:** Wireless sets?

**A:** They were all wireless.

**Q:** No, what I mean is other sets that the government used to communicate among themselves.

**A:** No, there were none.

**Q:** Now, when I interview, such talks come out. There was some talk about Surkhang Sawangchemmo or somebody having a wireless set. So I don't know whether this was some early wireless set or later.

**A:** I don't know if they had [wireless sets] in earlier times or not. The ones Athar and Lhotse first used were the older ones where the generator had to be turned by hand. Later, they got new ones that had solar charged batteries. They were small and easy to carry, and very fast. As of 1958, they were all the new ones. They had to be brought from abroad and could not be repaired in Tibet, right? When we started one in Shelkar, we did not do only that, but had to make roads and send people. If something needed repairs, we had to send parts. We could not drop [them] by plane, right? For example, the one we started at Shelkar [Tib. shel dkar] Dzong, it took about 12-13 days [via land]. A round trip would have taken about a month.

**Q:** You had some receiver at Shigatse Dzong?

**A:** At Shelkar Dzong.

**Q:** Oh, this was later, right?

**A:** Yes. At that time, it was very difficult. It was very difficult to send people since each person only had one ration card. If I came to you, then I could eat and not you. It was impossible for people to go. It was possible, but there was nothing to eat.

**Q:** Later, Samjola [Tib. bsam mchog lags] and Namseling [Tib. nam sras gling] were sent by the government for Chushigandru, right? To tell them to stop the revolt. Was the main reason for them to go and organize?

**A:** Now, regarding this, I don't know anything. I don't have it in my book and I had no connection with that. Athar and Radru Ngawang [Tib. dbra phrug ngag dbang] will most probably know about that, since they were in Lhoka at that time. And if you go to Nepal, then Baba Yeshe [Tib. 'ba' pa ye shes] will know. Then, Drawu Pön [Tib. gra'u dpon] might know or might not.

**Q:** Where is Drawu Pön?

**A:** He's at his settlement?

**Q:** Where?

**A:** It's close to Mysore [or did he say Mussoorie?].

**Q:** He was in the Chushigandru?

**A:** Yes. But Baba Yeshe and Athar will be able to tell you exactly, since they were in Lhoka. Now, if the Chinese told them to go, then they [Samjola et cetera] had no choice. But whether they were actually sent to organize something, they would be able to tell you.